

## Message Text

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43

ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OMB-01 AID-05 IGA-01 EB-07

COME-00 TRSE-00 MC-02 L-02 ACDA-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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R 021008Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5585

CNO WASHDC (OP-63)

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 1644

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NL

SUBJECT: LOCKHEED P-3 ORION SALE TO THE NETHERLANDS

1. CHARGE SAW DEFENSE STATE SECRETARY STEMERDINK APRIL 1 TO FOLLOW UP ON MARCH 27 MEETING AT WHICH STEMERDINK HAD RAISED QUESTION ABOUT LIKELIHOOD THAT FRG NAVY WOULD PURCHASE THE LOCKHEED S-3 VIKING TO REPLACE ITS BREGUET ATLANTIQUE RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT. STEMERDINK REFERRED TO HIS KEEN INTEREST AS STATE SECRETARY FOR MATERIEL IN STANDARDIZING PURCHASES OF NEW EQUIPMENT TO THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE AMONG NATO ALLIES. HIS HOPE AND OBJECTIVE, THEREFORE, WAS FOR THE NETHERLANDS AND THE FRG TO PURCHASE THE SAME REPLACEMENT RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT FOR THEIR NAVIES, NAMELY THE LOCKHEED P-3 ORION.

2. IN HIS APRIL 1 MEETING WITH STEMERDINK CHARGE EXPLAINED THAT THE VIKING WAS A SHORTER RANGE AIRCRAFT BUT QUITE ADEQUATE FOR THE FRG'S ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITY FOR PATROLLING THE BALTIC. BY CONTRAST THE NETHERLANDS NAVY NEEDED THE LONGER RANGE AFFORDED BY THE P-3 FOR PATROLLING THE NORTH SEA. MOREOVER, THE VIKING REQUIRED

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A CREW OF ONLY FOUR WHICH MADE IT VERY ATTRACTIVE TO

THE GERMANS, SO WE WERE INFORMED, BECAUSE OF THEIR DESIRE TO ECONOMIZE ON MANPOWER. WE ALSO MENTIONED OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE FRG AUTHORITIES HAD RESISTED FRENCH POLITICAL ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF AN ATLANTIQUE PURCHASE BY TAKING THE POSITION THAT WHAT THE GERMANS NEEDED WAS THE SHORTER RANGE VIKING WITH ITS MUCH SMALLER CREW REQUIREMENT. IF THE GERMANS WERE NOW TO AGREE TO RECONSIDER THE ORION, WE POINTED OUT TO STEMERDINK, THEY WOULD MOST LIKELY ALSO HAVE TO RECONSIDER THE ATLANTIQUE, WHICH WE GATHERED THEY WOULD BE MOST RELUCTANT TO DO.

3. WE CONCLUDED THAT ALTHOUGH THE US HAD NO PROBLEM WITH STEMERDINK'S OBJECTIVE OF STANDARDIZATION, IT SEEMED TO USE THAT IN THIS CASE THE DRAWBACKS TO STANDARDIZATION OUTWEIGHED THE POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES. FURTHERMORE, SINCE THE FRG SEEMED TO BE MOVING TOWARD A DECISION TO BUY THE VIKING, IT WOULD NOT BE FEASIBLE AT THIS LATE STAGE FOR US AUTHORITIES TO ATTEMPT TO DIVERT THEM TO THE P-3. FINALLY, SINCE STEMERDINK HAD HEARD THAT THE US S-3 OFFER TO THE FRG NAVY INCLUDED THE INDUCEMENT OF SOME MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR WORK IN GERMANY ON THE SIXTH FLEET'S S-3S WE TOLD STEMERDINK THAT THE US WOULD ATTEMPT TO ARRANGE THAT SOME OF THE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS TO US NAVY ORIONS BASED IN ICELAND WOULD BE DONE IN THE NETHERLANDS IF THE LATTER OPTED FOR THE ORION.

4. STEMERDINK ACCEPTED THE VALIDITY OF THESE POINTS BUT SAID HE STILL WONDERED WHETHER THE FRG NAVY WAS NOT RESTRICTING ITS NATO-ASSIGNED ROLE BY GEARING DOWN FROM A LONG-RANGE TO A SHORT-RANGE NAVY RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT. WE SAID WE WOULD BRING THIS POINT TO THE ATTENTION OF OUR AUTHORITIES IN BONN AND BRUSSELS FOR ANY COMMENT THEY CARED TO MAKE.

5. OUR ATTEMPT HERE WAS TO RESPOND TO STEMERDINK'S INQUIRY IN A WAY WHICH WOULD NOT JEOPARDIZE A GON DECISION, NOW IN THE FINAL STAGES, TO BUY THE P-3 ORION AND WOULD AT THE SAME TIME AVOID COMPLICATING CONFIDENTIAL

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THE SALE OF THE S-3 VIKING TO THE FRG. WE WILL BE GLAD TO RELAY TO STEMERDINK ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR INFORMATION WHICH ADDRESSEES THINK WOULD BE DESIRABLE.  
TANGUY

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